GTA 2021 - THE CHALLENGE OF OUR FUTURE

A Working Document

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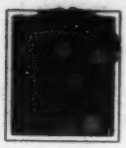

THE CHALLENGE OF OUR FUTURE

A Working Document

By the year 2021, the population of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is expected to increase by two million – this means that in about 30 years, six million people will call the GTA home. What will the GTA look like then? We have a chance now to shape that future, to ensure that it remains a vibrant and desirable place for us and for our children.

This report, *GTA 2021 – The Challenge of our Future, A Working Document,* is about challenges, opportunities and choices. Challenges to do things better than in the past – to avoid some of the problems which have faced other large urban areas. Opportunities to continue to work cooperatively with all local governments in the GTA to create a framework to guide future actions. Choices about how we want to live; informed choices made once we are aware of the costs and the implications of our decisions.

Our cars and transit systems are perhaps the most visible example of where choices must be made. Cars are everywhere. They are an important source of jobs, get us to and from work and are used for our daily chores. But their increased use has costs: rising pollution, loss of our valuable farmlands and recreational areas, lost time spent on congested roads. And what about our transit systems? While expanding them will reduce the need for cars, how can we afford to extend or improve these systems if we continue to want, and build, ever more sprawling suburbs?

While we don't often talk about our values or beliefs, they underlie all the decisions or choices which we make, as individuals and as governments. Values formed the basis of the consensus on urban growth management referred to in our earlier report, *Growing Together*. These values, *Social Equity, Enhanced Employment and Economic Vitality, and a Healthy Environment*, are more specifically referred to and explained in this report as is our belief that an ecosystem approach to planning will ensure that all values and concerns are considered before decisions are made.

This document has benefited from the advice of many provincial ministries, local governments and individuals. Working Groups of provincial and local municipal officials, together with other key resource people, are already at work preparing more detailed reports on the central issues highlighted in this document. These future reports will provide more detailed information and background to guide the actions we must take.

The provincial government is committed to providing leadership, as residents and governments within the GTA plan for the area's future. We've outlined a vision and will encourage discussion about this vision and the values upon which it is based. This discussion will lead to the creation of a strategic action plan. Successful implementation of this plan will not occur without the participation of all municipalities and people in the GTA. I welcome your comments and suggestions as we work toward achieving a sustainable future for our great area.

Ruth Grier
Minister responsible for the
Office for the Greater Toronto Area

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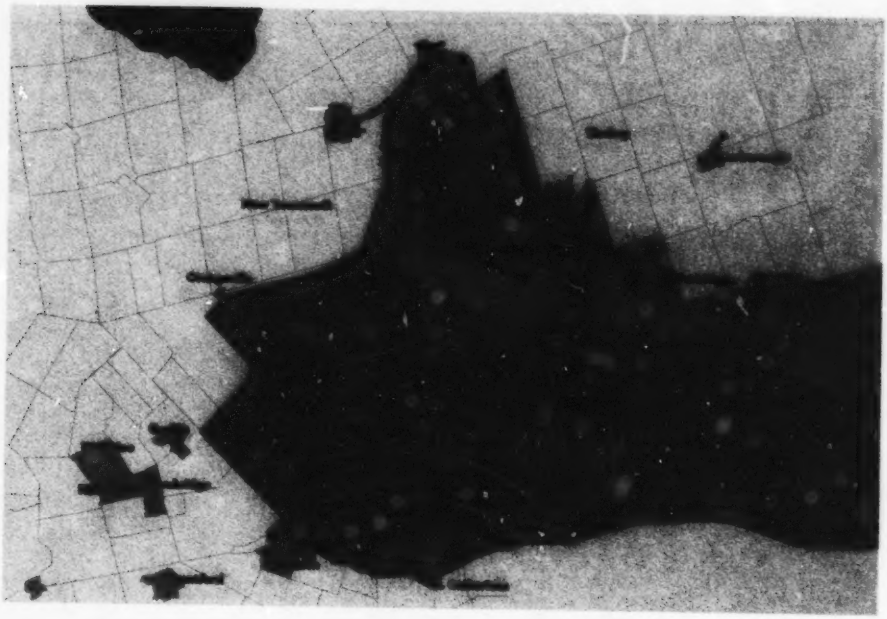
INTRODUCTION



Almost four million people, 40% of the population of Ontario, live in what is commonly called the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This Area comprises 30 area municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto and four regional municipalities – Halton, Peel, York, Durham.

The GTA has been one of the fastest growing urban areas in North America. A traditionally strong economy, a diverse multi-cultural population, and an attractive lifestyle have made the Area a magnet, drawing people from across Canada and around the world. Studies[1] conducted for the Province of Ontario and GTA municipalities have shown that the Area will continue to grow through natural increase and immigration, reaching a population approaching six million by 2021.

This population will require substantial new investments in housing and infrastructure, including water and sewer, waste management, transportation, and communications. Similarly, health care, education, recreation, and other human services must be greatly improved and expanded. Residents will not be adequately served unless these facilities and services are planned well in advance. In addition, many services must be adapted to new conditions and must accommodate a population of all ages with diverse cultural origins.

The Province's goal for the GTA is to **create and foster a quality of individual and community life which is just and sustainable - socially, economically, and environmentally.** To achieve this goal, the people of the Area must deal with issues which cross the borders of existing regional and local municipalities and the mandates of individual provincial ministries. These issues include the social, economic, and environmental effects of urbanization particularly that of urban sprawl, the

need to upgrade already overstrained infrastructure and human services, and the need to address the changing economic climate.

Meeting the challenges confronting the GTA will require action by all levels of government and by people in their own communities. Work to resolve these issues has already begun. In 1989, the Province commissioned three studies to examine urban development and environmental issues in the GTA. These were completed in 1990. Last year, the Province released *Growing Together*, which summarized these studies and the responses from municipalities and provincial ministries. This summary reported an emerging consensus among municipalities on the key challenges facing the Area.

The Province has been asked by municipalities and people in the GTA to play a more direct leadership role in maintaining and enhancing the existing quality of life in the Area. To do so effectively, there must be a shared vision which reflects community values and aspirations, and establishes goals for the people of the GTA and their governments.

This vision must be specific enough to enable tough decisions to be made and yet general enough to permit adaptations due to changing conditions. It must be stated clearly and tested with everyone whose lives and livelihoods will be affected. Only then can it be determined which actions will be necessary to support and sustain the shared vision.

This document articulates the Province's goal for the GTA. It describes the values which this government and others believe should underlie a growth management strategy and it suggests what the GTA could be like in 30 years if action is taken now. It does not contain precise details, but it does provide the basis for public debate to determine what people and governments want for their communities.

The final product, developed after full public participation, will be a strategic action plan for the GTA which clearly states government policy and which will guide decision making by provincial and municipal governments over the next 30 years.

Change in the GTA will not occur overnight. The creation of the strategic action plan is only the beginning of a process of change. The process will require a shared commitment over an extended period of time and its full effects will not be felt for many years. The people of the GTA, municipal governments, and the Province share an understanding of the challenges. There is much more to be done, but working together, a new vision for the GTA can become a reality.

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1 Clayton Research Associates Limited, *Projections of Population and Households in the Greater Toronto Area*, (prepared for the Greater Toronto Coordinating Committee and the Regional Planning Commissioners Sub-Committee on Population Projections, October, 1989).

Hemson Consulting Ltd., *Employment Forecasts for the Greater Toronto Area to 2031*, (prepared for the Greater Toronto Coordinating Committee, October, 1989).

CHAPTER 2

A SHARED SYSTEM OF VALUES

The Province's goal is to ***create and foster a quality of individual and community life which is just and sustainable – socially, economically, and environmentally.*** *To reach this goal, the Province believes that there must be a strategy to manage growth effectively in a co-operative relationship with the municipalities and in consultation with the people who live and work in the GTA. Successful strategies must be based on a system of values which is shared broadly in the community.*

Values are the fundamental ideals and principles of our community. They reflect the qualities of life which are held in highest esteem, and which governments must respect and uphold. They are the foundation for the Province's goal and vision for the community the GTA can become. Commitment to a value system provides both guidance and continuity in meeting the challenges between now and 2021.

The Province believes that the three key values are *Social Equity, Enhanced Employment and Economic Vitality, and Achievement and Maintenance of a Healthy Environment.* The following is a description of what these values mean and how they are interrelated. The elements of these values are explained in greater detail in the figures and supplementary text that follows this chapter.

Social Equity

Social equity is based on broad principles of justice and compassion. Social equity results in improved social and economic relationships between people, as citizens and neighbours, as contributors to the economy, and as participants in community life. A positive social environment, which is necessary for social equity, enhances the diversity and depth of human relationships, including relationships between neighbours, between members of cultural groups or other human associations, and between members of larger, more diverse geographic or political communities. Equity between the generations is also important. It is not enough to consider the requirements of the present; adequate provision must also be made for future generations.

A positive social environment is important because it values the person and provides a sense of belonging and self-worth. It contributes to the continuity and cohesion of society. A healthy and equitable society is one which encourages participation in the decision-making processes of the community. It also requires public services necessary to promote the health, education, and social well-being of its citizens.

Enhanced Employment and Economic Vitality

A decent quality of life depends in part on the number and diversity of employment opportunities available. The economic health of an area affects the availability of such opportunities. A high value, however, must be placed on the protection of the environment, as we now realize that a healthy economy in an industrialized nation is not possible without a healthy environment. Therefore, enhanced employment and economic activity must also bring with it the opportunity to protect and improve the environment. Prosperity must be environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

Belief in a prosperous and equitable society requires that employment be provided in a broad range of high-quality jobs and that the costs and benefits of economic activity are shared fairly. Workers must receive an adequate return for their labour and investors must receive an acceptable return on their investment.

The structural changes taking place in the economy make it particularly important to provide stable employment opportunities and to diversify economic activity throughout the GTA. The economic health of urban centres in the Area is central to a healthy provincial and national economy. For the economy of the GTA to be healthy, it needs a diverse base to allow for adaptation to changes taking place globally. The economic climate must foster efficiency, productivity, and innovation.

The economic, social, and environmental character of an area is a reflection of the industries and businesses located within it. Companies that will provide stable and secure employment opportunities in safe and healthy work places must be attracted and retained. These companies must permit employees at differing skill levels to realize their full potential and compensate them appropriately.

Achievement and Maintenance of a Healthy Environment

The environment is composed of both natural and cultural components.

The natural environment includes land, air, water, plant, and animal life. It includes undeveloped natural habitats within urban areas. A clean and varied natural environment is valued both for its own sake and for its importance to the continuance and quality of human life. Significant natural features must not be maintained as "islands of green;" these areas require links to and support from other surrounding natural areas.

In the cultural environment, human activity predominates. The cultural environment includes the built urban environment (homes, industries, offices, infrastructure), agricultural lands, and resources such as parks, trails, heritage buildings, and archeological sites. It is essential that any change in the cultural environment contribute to its health rather than its degradation.

The people of the GTA depend on a healthy natural environment, a healthy cultural environment, and the harmonious interaction between the two to support a desirable quality of life. Good land stewardship, land use, and construction practices must be followed to avoid degradation or destruction of natural environments, agricultural lands, and local cultural resources. Land stewardship is essential to maintain the environment for future generations. In areas where past practices are no longer acceptable, remediation must occur. The cultural and the natural environment must be complementary.

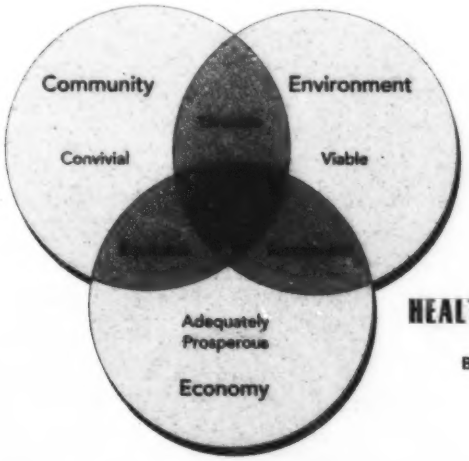
Integrating the Values

The three values of social equity, enhanced employment and economic vitality, and the achievement and maintenance of a healthy environment are interrelated. Social equity is not possible without a sustainable, productive economy. A sustainable, productive economy, in turn, is not possible if the environment is not healthy, if natural habitats are being degraded or squandered, or if infrastructure requirements are not adequately considered. Investments from a healthy economy enable the preservation and remediation of the environment. These values considered together form the value system upon which the vision for the GTA is based and upon which the strategy for achieving it will be built. People everywhere are becoming more aware of the interactions between society, the environment, and the economy, and are striving to keep them all in balance. It is not a coincidence that these or similar values are at the basis of many recent reports originating from both within the GTA and far beyond its boundaries. The *Towards a Liveable Metropolis* report from the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, for example, seeks a balance in all sectors between social well-being, economic vitality, and environmental integrity (see Figures 1 & 2 for excerpts). Recent growth management reports from the cities of Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver are based on similar values. These reports reflect their different histories of public debate and planning practice, but their similarities originate from increasing public and professional awareness of the need to draw together social, economic, and environmental planning.

There is general awareness that these values must form the basis of any growth management strategy. However, this realization has been arrived at through different routes. Perhaps the greatest attention has been focused on the idea of sustainable development popularized by the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission). This concept seeks "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[3]

The healthy city idea, with individual human health as its basis, provides another way of looking at these values. This concept has been expanded from individual human health to include the health of the community. The healthy community model, illustrated below, was developed by York University's Dr. Trevor Hancock.[4] It illustrates the relationships between environment, economy, and community. Each component in his model must have certain characteristics to achieve community health. For instance, the community must be liveable, convivial, and equitable for the people who live in it; the environment must be viable, sustainable, and liveable; and the economy must be equitable, sustainable, and adequately prosperous. When the environment, the economy, and the community have all these characteristics and are in balance a community is said to be healthy.

In developing a strategic action plan for the GTA the Province must be aware of each of the underlying values and what they mean. Means must be developed to integrate these values into government policy and action to achieve the goal of **creating and fostering a quality of individual and community life which is just and sustainable - socially, economically, and environmentally**. If the Province is successful in achieving its vision, there will be a more equitable supply of affordable housing and public facilities and services; a strengthened economy able to provide a range of job opportunities throughout the GTA; and an environment which has been protected and restored. It is important that this value system be constantly referred to as the strategic action plan is developed and refined.



HEALTHY COMMUNITY MODEL

By Trevor Hancock

2 The Metropolitan Toronto Planning Department, Metropolitan Plan Review Report No. 13, *Towards a Liveable Metropolis. A Discussion Paper in the Metropolitan Plan Review Series* (Toronto, May, 1991).

3 Gro Harlem Bruntland and the World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 43.

4 Trevor Hancock, *Towards Healthy and Sustainable Communities: Health, Environment and Economy at the Local Level* (Toronto: York University, November 20, 1990).

FIGURE 1

"THE LIVEABLE METROPOLIS"

"The concept of liveability reflects an emphasis on quality of life within the context of a large and mature urban setting. Quality of urban life can be viewed in a number of ways: in the ability of individuals and communities to meet their needs; the functional integrity of natural systems, and the equality of opportunity to access resources, to pursue community, cultural and, lifestyle options, and to continue meaningful traditions. The promotion of these differing aspects of the urban community in balance are reflected in a 'liveable metropolis.'

Liveability is characterized by the following interacting components:

ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY: clean air, soil and water, and a variety of species and habitats maintained through practices that ensure sustainability over the long-term. The manner in which natural resources are used and the impact of individual, corporate and societal actions on the natural processes directly influences the quality of urban life.

ECONOMIC VITALITY: a broadly based, competitive economy responsive to changing circumstances and able to attract new investment so that opportunities for employment and investment will be available in both the short and long-term.

SOCIAL WELL-BEING: safety and health as well as equitable access to housing, regional, community and neighbourhood services, and recreational and cultural activities. The ability to participate in the decision-making processes of the community is integral to building strong cohesive communities.

Environmental integrity, social well-being and economic vitality together portray a dynamic system of relationships. To plan and manage the metropolis, therefore, decision-making and resulting actions must address the interrelationships and focus on the question of balance. Further, to accommodate changing circumstances and emerging issues, systems for planning and managing the metropolis must allow for flexibility. If policies and decisions are to be effective they must also be attuned to future needs, taking into consideration the fragile nature of the environment and the finite supply of many resources.

An informed and integrated decision-making process is thus necessary to achieve a liveable metropolis. No one dimension should be consistently promoted at the expense of others."

Towards a Liveable Metropolis, p. 14

FIGURE 2

EXAMPLES OF HOW SECTORAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS AFFECT LIVEABILITY

Components of Liveability

SECTORS	ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY	SOCIAL WELL-BEING	ECONOMIC VITALITY
Housing	• design • density • location • energy source & consumption	• affordability • availability • options • sense of community	• labour force availability • employment opportunities • infrastructure investment • materials availability
Physical Infrastructure	• land use pattern • modal split • energy source & consumption • design • technology • efficiency	• affordability • comfort, safety & health • access to transit • availability of options • mobility	• capacity • alignment • goods mobility • infrastructure investment
Natural Environment	• productivity • diversity • viability of processes • conservation • preservation techniques	• health & safety • recreation/leisure • options • aesthetics • climate • resource availability	• resource availability • employment opportunities • product diversity • research & development • leisure/tourism industry • natural asset protection
Employment and Commerce	• design • density • efficiency • waste production • resource consumption • location	• income independence • options • work environment	• infrastructure investment • variety • competitiveness • activity level
Social Infrastructure	• design • location • environmental sensitivity	• availability • independence • opportunity for cultural expression • options	• labour force satisfaction • leisure/ tourism industry
Education	• information • awareness • behavioural change	• opportunity for personal development • health protection	• training • research & development

Towards a Liveable Metropolis, p. 34

SOCIAL EQUITY

Social equity is based on broad principles of justice and compassion, including:

EQUAL ACCESS to the basic resources and requirements for a decent quality of life in the GTA, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY to acquire a high-quality education and needed skills, and to obtain employment.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING close to locations of employment and other community facilities.

ACCESSIBLE and **AFFORDABLE** facilities and services, including greenspaces and parks, community facilities, public transportation, communications, and support services.

Social equity will not be achieved unless the social environment is:

SAFE, inclusive public spaces for all, day and night, and safe homes or havens available to those in need.

PARTICIPATIVE, ensuring that people can and are encouraged to exercise their right to participate in decisions affecting their welfare knowing that there will be a fair and even-handed application of government regulations.

DIVERSE, celebrating the contribution of the individual to the vitality of the community.

SUPPORTIVE, fostering a tradition of caring for one another, and providing necessary support services.

TOLERANT and **INCLUSIVE** of established residents and newcomers, respecting their differences and capitalizing on their unique talents.

SUSTAINABLE in providing a solid basis for future generations.

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED, reflecting personal responsibilities to the wide variety of communities of which we are all members.

ENHANCED EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC VITALITY

Employment and economic activity must be:

SUSTAINABLE, providing lasting prosperity by conserving resources and promoting enterprises which enhance, or do not harm, the environment. Short term economic gain at the long term expense of the environment is no longer acceptable, and cannot provide continuing, high-quality employment.

COMPETITIVE and **EFFICIENT**, not through cutting wages but through seeking high value- added jobs and knowledge-based inputs of a highly trained, skilled workforce, and through reducing unnecessarily high costs related to housing and traffic congestion, and in striving to reduce costs through the adoption of energy efficient design and procedures.

ADAPTABLE, employees and managers being able and willing to learn new skills, to take advantage of innovations, new products, and markets.

FAIR in sharing benefits and costs of economic change. Workers must get an adequate return for their labour, while investors get an acceptable return on their investment.

ACCESSIBLE, with jobs close to where people live or readily accessible through transit.

DIVERSE, providing a range of employment opportunities to meet varying needs.

INNOVATIVE, promoting a workplace culture that looks towards innovations as part of the continuous improvement needed to compete in a global economy.

MARKET SENSITIVE, in tune with the changing product and service mix required by a changing economy.

A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment and the cultural environment must be viewed as interrelated and interdependent, not mutually exclusive. The basis for a sustainable relationship with a clean and uncontaminated environment must be based on stewardship and remediation to enable future generations to enjoy the same or better quality of life as exists now.

The natural environment must be:

SUSTAINABLE for human, animal and plant communities, through proactive protection, enhancement, and rehabilitation of natural features and systems.

INTEGRAL and **CONNECTED**, maintaining the complex interactions, processes, and connections between the ecosystem's various functional components. The natural environment must exist as a network of functioning interconnected spaces, not as isolated islands of green.

DIVERSE, with a good mix of interconnected natural areas and features providing essential species habitat and maintaining ecological processes.

The cultural environment must be:

HUMAN SCALE, in the design of new buildings, streets, and open spaces; in the conservation of significant heritage buildings and districts; fostering a sense of well-being and neighbourhood identity, and thereby contributing to human contact and social cohesion.

OPEN and **SAFE**, providing spaces that are conducive to public use, centrally located, easily reached, and surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, and cultural facilities.

DIVERSE, providing a range of housing, jobs, shopping, and public and private services, etc., to meet a variety of needs.

BALANCED, through a proper mix of home, work and recreational places leading to community self-sufficiency and vitality.

ACCESSIBLE, providing for the movement of people and goods from one place to the next including accessibility to open space and natural areas.

INTEGRATED and **ATTRACTIVE**, with a good mix of agricultural land and built areas, including low impact transitions between natural and human dominated areas; with sensitive design of new buildings to provide visual links with existing buildings as well as enhancing the community.

CONTINUOUS and **DYNAMIC**, allowing for change in keeping with human needs and potential, while preserving features that provide a sense of personal and family belonging in the community over time and between generations.

LIVEABLE, through the recognition that a built area is a community, not a collection of buildings.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH

This is not the first time that the GTA has faced the challenges of growth. In 1953, rapid suburban growth beyond the boundaries of the City of Toronto led the Province to create the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. Metro Toronto met the challenges of suburban growth and is hailed as one of the first and most successful integrated metropolitan governments in the world.

By the mid-1960s, growth pressures were apparent beyond the boundaries of Metro Toronto. The Province conducted studies to guide planning in the area, including the 1967 **Metropolitan Toronto and Region Transportation Study** (MTARTS), the 1970 **Design for Development: the Toronto-Centred Region Plan** (TCR), and the 1974 **Central Ontario Lakeshore Urban Complex** (COLUC). These studies raised awareness of the future needs of the area. By the late 1970s, having created four regional municipalities surrounding Metro (York, Durham, Peel, and Halton), the Province ceased efforts to plan for the GTA, leaving this responsibility with regional and local municipalities.

Given the success of Metro Toronto, the regions, and the existing mechanisms for growth management, **why is a new strategy required?** Prior to answering this question, the GTA's special achievements and challenges will be considered and the results of recent studies of urban development and environmental issues in the GTA will be reviewed.

Recently there has been much discussion centering around the challenges facing the Area. Many of these issues are listed in this chapter and need addressing. However, the GTA has many achievements and assets. If agreement can be reached on a shared vision, the people and governments of the GTA can build upon these achievements to ensure that the Area remains sustainable and prosperous.

3.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

Since 1953, three million people from all parts of Canada and the world have come to the GTA seeking a better life for themselves and their families. They have enriched the cultural diversity and contributed to the economic vitality of the Area with their talents, energies, traditions, and resources. Together, the people of the GTA have established a common civic culture based on shared values and a collective attachment to public institutions where cultural diversity thrives and social tolerance prevails. As a result, in 1990, the United Nations deemed the Toronto region to be the most cosmopolitan metropolis in the world.

The quality of urban life in the GTA is still the envy of many other areas where urban decay, crime, racial tension, and social problems have increased dramatically in recent decades. The region's world reputation is based on its economic vitality, cultural diversity, and social harmony, which are a result of a progressive adaptation to urban growth.

Several factors have contributed to this achievement. National social programs such as Medicare, the Canada Assistance Plan, Unemployment Insurance, and regional equalization payments have provided Canadians in all parts of the country with a basic income level and a basic standard of public services. As a result, Canada's metropolitan centres have not been overwhelmed, as those in the United States have been, by vast migrations of peoples from "have not" regions.

Other important factors include: substantial provincial and federal investment in the GTA's infrastructure; dispersal of public and low cost housing outside the City of Toronto, thereby strengthening the social integration of the Area; and local government provision of the highest standard of public services in North America.

The Area's economy has sustained a growing population and contributed significantly to the economic vitality of Ontario and Canada. The GTA is a national hub for manufacturing, finance, head office activities, education, transportation, communications, tourism, culture, and business services. It is also the primary centre for public administration in Ontario, providing many jobs in professional, technical, administrative, and support services. Wealth generated through public and private sector activities has in turn fuelled the retail and personal services sector.

The future social and economic well-being of the GTA and Ontario will be sustained and enhanced by the GTA's significant assets, which include:

- a well educated and skilled labour force;
- a concentration of intellectual capital and institutions dedicated to research, education, and career training;
- a variety of national and international headquarters, for example, the financial services and information technology sectors;
- a balance of old, new, large, and small industries;
- diverse support services and industries required for the specialization of industries;
- well defined and maintained transportation and communication links;
- responsive public institutions;
- a pleasant and attractive environment;
- a high quality, readily accessible urban life, rich in amenities; and
- a population of diverse global origins with ties to parts of the world which are now key business markets.

3.2 CHALLENGES

The primary challenge for the people and governments of the GTA, is to take advantage of the Area's assets to maintain and enhance the quality of life for present and future generations. This must be done while meeting special challenges: to accommodate a growing and more diverse population; to develop socially integrated communities; to create a sustainable, prosperous economy; and, to enhance the GTA's environment. In addition, the need for a more compact urban form and for infrastructure decisions which will support the directions of a new strategic action plan must be addressed.

Accommodating a Growing Population

The GTA's population has grown on average about 60,000 per year over the last decade, approximately half of which is the result of natural increase. Even with a slower future rate of growth projected, the present population of four million is expected to reach six million[5] by 2021, increasing the need for new infrastructure and expanded public services.

Population growth of the GTA

1986 1991 2011 2021

Accommodating an additional two million people by the year 2021, raises the question: **Why not restrict or divert this growth to reduce adverse effects on the GTA, while enhancing economic growth elsewhere in the Province?** Experience in other jurisdictions[6] shows that policies aimed at restricting population growth have not been successful and growth has continued to occur.

Furthermore, "economic growth diverted from the GTA may be more likely to be diverted south of the border than to other parts of southern Ontario."[7] Instead of diverting growth, population increase must be managed to ensure that it is complemented by sustainable economic growth. This can be an opportunity to improve the region's environment, to pursue new economic directions and to enhance community life.

Planning For a Diverse and Changing Population

Much of the increase in population is expected to come from immigration, which will further diversify the GTA's multi-cultural mix. In an era of increasing world trade, the GTA will enjoy a distinct advantage in having a culturally diverse population with significant global relationships. However, demands for special support services (e.g. language and career training) will increase just as we begin to need more social and health care services for the aging 'baby boom' generation.

Family and household structures are changing, with important impacts on housing and public service needs. Since the Second World War, community designs, forms of housing, and provision of public services have been guided by an image of the typical family type and residential environment. There is no longer a typical family structure with standardized needs. There is a

The aging population of the GTA

Under 16 AGE Over 65

need to make a broader range of affordable, low and medium rise, high density housing available close to job opportunities, across the GTA.

The growing number of seniors, many of whom wish to continue living in their neighbourhoods and communities, require compact living environments which are close to social, cultural, and retail amenities and accessible by foot or by public transportation. For the increased number of single adult households, including single mothers, ownership of a 'single family dwelling' is not appropriate to income or space needs.

Dependence on public transportation services will increase for single-earner and two-earner families which are hard pressed to meet housing and living costs, and unable to afford a car.

Younger families with children face less assured economic prospects, and therefore require more affordable family housing accessible to lower cost public transportation. Even for traditional families, the pursuit of economic and social equality for women and men continues to lead to new roles and activities for all family members. This has resulted in changing needs for housing, transportation, and public services. As with seniors, increasing numbers of families with children will need support services in their immediate environments, or easily accessible by public transportation, including child care, parent resource centres, and crisis facilities.

Developing Socially Integrated Communities

As well as meeting the diverse needs of all segments of the population, the design and structure of communities should preserve and enhance the conditions of social harmony. They should also promote the development of inclusive communities where cultural origins and economic status are not barriers to membership and participation. The safety and security of residents is most assured when positive human relations are promoted and experienced in daily life. The evidence from other major cities makes it clear that there is a painful collective price to be paid when separation and exclusion are reflected in the design of communities and neighbourhoods.

Socially integrated communities are distinguished by the availability of a range of suitable, affordable housing, access to necessary support services, employment opportunities matching the diversity of human skills and employment needs, and access to forms of urban mobility less dependent on automobiles. These characteristics require communities which are more compact in their design.

Creating a Sustainable, Prosperous Economy

In the past, the GTA's economy has been stimulated by the expanded market provided by increased population. However, population growth does not assure economic growth, and recent economic changes show the need for effective strategies to ensure that the GTA's economy grows at least as much as its population.

The Ontario economy is undergoing significant stress as business adjusts to the pressures of globalization, North American free trade, and the loss of markets due to the recession. Concern has been expressed about the competitiveness of the GTA relative to other urban areas and about the ability of provincial and local governments to sustain public investment and services, given the effect of the economic downturn on their tax bases and fiscal capacities.

In the past, the growing economy provided jobs, an increased standard of living, and a secure base for public services. However, economic growth does not necessarily

result in equally improved living standards for all, nor does the modern global economy always strengthen the social stability of the urban environment. Rising prosperity during the 1980s was accompanied by expanding social disparities between the wealthy and the poor. Foodbanks and homelessness increased beside luxury consumption.

For most individuals and families, the GTA's economic health is measured by the availability of employment at wages sufficient to maintain a reasonable standard of living. To provide this employment, it is necessary to nurture high value-added and related support industries, and preserve economically competitive manufacturing within the GTA and in surrounding areas of Southern Ontario.

Demographic changes are resulting in a rapidly aging workforce and fewer new labour market entrants. New market entrants have traditionally brought new skills to the workplace. Those already in the labour market are finding that factors such as technological change are resulting in their existing skills no longer being in demand.

A competitive and adaptive economy depends on effective training and education to provide workers able to adjust to new challenges. A well-educated workforce is a valuable resource which will attract new investment and provide increased employment opportunities. However, labour force skills must match employment opportunities. This requires appropriate programs offered by formal educational institutions and continued efforts by employers.

Concerns that the GTA's competitiveness is impaired by high production costs need to be addressed. These costs cannot be reduced effectively or fairly by reducing wages. Rather, a strategy is required that attacks the root causes of high costs including: wage pressures caused by the limited availability of affordable housing; the costs and productivity losses associated with a congested transportation system (estimated at $2 billion per year in 1988); and, the need for infrastructure appropriate to business and individuals for the next century.

To create sustainable prosperity, cooperative partnerships between government and business must be strengthened. Through these partnerships, we can make the best use of existing assets, build on those assets, ensure a high quality of economic growth, and foster awareness of the true costs and benefits to business and the general population. Economic development costs should reflect the true costs of environmental protection, resource depletion, and clean-up. Specific tasks include:

- providing accommodation and amenities for a growing and changing population, including affordable housing close to employment locations across the GTA;
- providing better and more equitably distributed public services;
- establishing a priority setting mechanism for public investments in infrastructure;
- continued development and diversification of local economies;
- fostering local economic development ventures; and
- ensuring an equitable distribution of household incomes, which will support an active local retail sector.

Enhancing the GTA's Environment

The GTA's environment is rich in wildlife, unique physical features, and natural and cultural resources. But the environment is stressed due to increases in population and economic activity coupled with land extensive development patterns. These developments consume large amounts of land and encroach on natural and cultural heritage areas. As well, because densities are not great enough they cannot support effective public transit, with the result that dependence on the automobile for commuting has increased substantially.

There is increasing awareness that this settlement pattern contributes to the degradation of air, land, and water. This deterioration is the result of: ever-increasing levels of auto traffic and auto emissions; increased and inefficient

energy demands (for heating and cooling); inadequate management of stormwater and sewage; increased garbage production; industrial pollution and waste; and, groundwater withdrawal. Low density settlement also results in loss of greenlands, farmland, and heritage resources.

Society has become more conscious than ever of the negative effects of some forms of economic activity on the environment. The prospects of global warming, impacts of acid rain, and increased damage from pollution have led to the recognition that we must become a conserver society. People are aware of the importance of the environment to a sound economy, including the economy's dependence on natural and cultural resources, and they want economic development which is less harmful to the environment.

A consensus is emerging that the Area's physical, biological, and cultural assets are a form of heritage capital that can no longer be squandered, but must be preserved and enhanced for the benefit of both present and future generations. This new approach of living off the interest while protecting the capital, will ensure the region's continued liveability and provide for future economic activity.

Creating Compact Urban Form

Besides social inclusion and changing population needs, there are compelling economic and ecological imperatives supporting more compact living environments. The fiscal and tax resources of governments are more constrained than in previous decades. Thus, the GTA's future ability to provide high-quality essential urban services such as transit, water and sewer, education, and health care will depend on more cost effective, compact patterns of development. The collective responsibility to protect the biosphere also means the design of urban form must be more land and energy efficient.

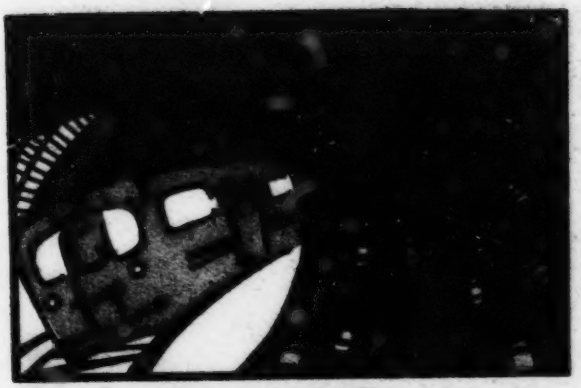
In previous decades, as the population grew, communities spread out at lower and lower densities in an attempt to achieve the 'North American dream' of a single-family home on a large lot, with several cars in the driveway. In the past decade, both employment opportunities and housing subdivisions featuring large single family homes have grown rapidly in the regional municipalities around Metro Toronto. Unfortunately, the availability of affordable housing has not kept pace with the growing employment opportunities in these communities. This has increased the need to commute to work, and often creates problems for employers and employees through lost time due to congestion on the few transportation links. There are also increased stresses on family life and limited ability to participate in community life.

This development pattern is now straining infrastructure and human services, and has prompted concern that standards of service are declining. It also has many negative environmental implications including the loss of irreplaceable agricultural land.

Providing Infrastructure

The GTA's successful evolution to a major North American metropolitan area can be attributed in part to the capacities that were built into road, sewer, water, and transit systems during the formative years of Metro and the four regions. These capacities provided for growth and allowed the Province and the municipalities to turn their attention to the provision of other vital services such as schools, colleges, and hospitals. There have been very few major infrastructure projects constructed since the early 1970s. Meanwhile, the population has continued to grow and these systems are now almost fully utilized, with important parts often operating beyond design capacity.

Because of residents' wishes that the area not be dominated by cars, the GTA now has fewer expressway miles per capita than any other major North American centre. Unfortunately, this laudable attempt to contain cars was not offset by the alternative: transit expansion. Over the last 15 years there has been virtually no expansion of the TTC, and suburban transit has been slow to develop because of the low densities.



One subway line carries 35,000 people per hour in each direction... equivalent to a 36 lane Don Valley Parkway.

The transit system in the GTA is highly regarded, but is unable to adequately serve the complex commuting patterns. Thus, automobile travel remains dominant, imposing unacceptable economic, environmental, and social burdens. Even if these burdens were acceptable, the area does not have the physical capacity to accommodate sufficient new roads to serve the commuting requirements of the next century. Therefore, a significantly expanded and enlarged transit system is essential.

Some new road construction may be required to meet specific needs, such as intercity and rural, travel and goods movement, but building new roads must not be the total solution. Instead, the focus should be on more efficient use of the existing road network. Building new roads will result in the paving of valuable land and further encourage driving rather than using transit.

The need for other types of infrastructure has also developed over this period. Several of the regions are currently without any excess sewage capacity, and the reliance on septic systems in unserviced areas has degrading effects on groundwater sources. Two of the regions are suffering water shortages. While these deficiencies must be resolved in order to accommodate current and anticipated population, it is necessary to minimize future needs for new water and sewage treatment capacity through conservation efforts.

About 50% more garbage per capita is being generated than was projected when the current solid waste sites in the GTA were established in the 1960s – 1970s. The municipalities of the GTA must establish an area-wide mechanism to manage solid waste, establish waste reduction programs, and increase the portion of the remaining waste which is recycled.

Investments by governments must be coordinated with other essential infrastructure developments, including energy distribution systems (hydro-electric, gas, oil) and local distribution (telephone and cable), inter-city and international communications networks.

Substantially increased investments in both physical and social infrastructure must be made. The 1991 *Budget Paper E, Ontario in the 1990s*, recognized the requirement for public investment in physical infrastructure. In the case of capital budgets for new or updated infrastructure, it is especially important that the right decisions are made and that priorities are established. No level of government today has the financial capacity that it had in the 1960s. But with careful planning, priority setting,and the conservation of existing assets, the necessary infrastructure can be provided.

A multi-billion dollar investment in the capital and social infrastructure of the Area, if combined with a vigorous growth management strategy will be repaid in economic benefits, in enhanced social and environmental conditions, and in reduced future costs for such things as environmental rehabilitation. Without these investments, the GTA's capacity to pursue social, economic, and environmental goals will be impaired, and standards of living will decline. These investments are fundamental in sustaining communities, in attracting and maintaining employment, in competing in the global market, and in the maintenance and enhancement of the environment and social programs which are the measure of society.

3.3 AN EMERGING CONSENSUS ON GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Three studies were commissioned to examine urban development and environmental issues. These reports and the comments received in response to them are discussed in greater detail in an earlier document, *Growing Together*. Despite the different focus of each study, they share much in common, especially an understanding of the new emphasis on environmental quality, the need for a regional perspective on both area-wide and local matters, and a concern with the human impacts of urban development.

The *Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study*, prepared for the Province and municipalities by a consortium of consultants led by the IBI Group, provides comparative information on infrastructure requirements, efficiency of services, costs, and other indicators of urban quality of life for three alternative patterns of future development in the GTA. These include:

- a Spread model, which continues historical development patterns;
- a Concentrated development model, which directs all new growth into the existing urban envelope; and
- a Nodal model, intermediate in urban density between the other two, which focuses development on existing communities, with some associated expansion of these urban areas.

The Federal-Provincial Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront has studied both local and area-wide issues related to development of the Lake Ontario waterfront between Newcastle and Burlington, including the ecological dependence of the waterfront on the Toronto watershed, extending north to the Oak Ridges Moraine and west to the Niagara Escarpment. Several papers have been published, including *Watershed*, which recommend an integrated ecosystem approach to planning.

Options for a Greater Toronto Area Greenlands Strategy, conducted for the Province by Ron Kanter, M.P.P., identifies a GTA greenlands system, and considers how to protect specific areas. This study complements the Royal Commission's focus on waterfront planning.

Comments received in response to these reports from stakeholders and the public indicated an emerging consensus on the basis and requirements for future development in the GTA, including:

- broad support for a new approach to managing growth, founded on an environmental framework;
- a new awareness and understanding of our ecosystem and the need for sustainable urban and natural environments;
- a desire to reflect the quality of life and equity goals in our communities;
- widespread acceptance that continued urban sprawl is untenable for environmental, equity, and economic reasons;
- considerable support for some form of concentrated, nodal development within the urban envelope;
- a better balance between housing and employment;
- increased use of public transit;
- support for a new growth management strategy that continues economic and employment growth; and
- a desire for strong provincial leadership within a partnership relationship with regional and area municipalities, including a rationalized funding process.

3.4 THE NEED FOR A NEW, INTEGRATED STRATEGY

The challenges facing the people and governments in the GTA are unlike those of the past. They demand more than fine-tuning of existing plans and old approaches. They demand a new strategy to guide the GTA into the 21st century. The structural solutions of the past are not a panacea for managing growth in the 1990s. The 1990s are different.

First, the GTA is faced with an increasingly diverse population living in an evolving, multicentred region. Traditional development patterns are straining infrastructure and human services, and are having significant negative social, economic, fiscal, and environmental impacts. Therefore, more compact living environments which are affordable, land and energy efficient, and accessible to services must be encouraged.

Second, it can no longer be assumed that economic growth will automatically follow population growth. Therefore, in addition to managing population growth, economic development of a form which will enhance the quality of life for residents of the GTA must be encouraged.

Third, society is now much more aware of the impact of human activity on the GTA's natural and cultural environment. Future increases in population and economic activity must be accommodated in accordance with environmental standards.

Fourth, the region is faced with a very different public finance environment. In the past, the Province and the municipalities were in a much better position to finance new infrastructure. Now resources are strained. New ways must be found for governments to work together to plan and finance required services and infrastructure.

Finally, even the concept of growth management itself is being redefined. It is no longer enough merely to manage the physical aspects of growth. A new approach is necessary.[8] (see Figure 3)

These challenges cross political boundaries, and existing planning mechanisms are not structured to deal with such issues. Since municipalities can only plan within their own boundaries, planning and control across regional and local municipal boundaries is compartmentalized. Also, provincial ministries are organized in such a way that they pursue their individual mandates, with the result that actions often seem to be at cross purposes, and efforts to coordinate development are frustrated.

The existing planning process itself compartmentalizes social, economic, and environmental values, addressing each in isolation. For example, developments are often planned with little consideration for cumulative effects on community and environmental values. These are often marginalized as external effects to be mitigated on a project by project basis. GTA-wide coordination of planning for services and facilities is required. There are some that think that this coordination should be achieved by simplifying or rationalizing existing local government structures and accountability mechanisms. Although structural changes might help to address the GTA's challenges, the time required to make such changes would be considerable. Using the existing institutional arrangements to reach a timely agreement on the priorities for future services and facilities will ensure that both the coordination and planning objectives can be met.

In Chapter 2 of this paper, a need to integrate values when planning for the future was identified. The ecosystem approach described by the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront[9] (see Figure 4) provides a mechanism to integrate planning for an interacting, interdependent complex. The GTA is not an ecosystem in the traditional sense, but the approach nonetheless provides a useful tool to understand the relationships between the regions of the GTA, and the interactions within the planning process.

The communities of the GTA form an intertwined urban system spreading seamlessly across all five regions of the GTA, and linked by infrastructure systems (highways, transit, water and sewer pipes, etc.). Decisions regarding urban development and infrastructure have impacts that cross boundaries, influencing prosperity, ease of movement of people and goods, residential and business location, and the environment.

The ecosystem approach is not an 'environment or social equity first, development second' process, but an approach which rules out compromises which would undermine the integrity of the ecosystem. The ecosystem approach includes and integrates all values; it considers environmental, economic, and social factors equally in the decision making process. The philosophy is not based on a win-lose mentality, but on arriving at an appropriate course of action after giving full and equal consideration to all factors.

In consultation with affected regional and area municipalities, the Province has concluded that a new strategy for the GTA is necessary. This strategy must provide a common framework for specific policies and plans developed by the Province, regions and area municipalities. The ecosystem approach provides a mechanism to ensure that integrated, value-driven planning is kept alive and current.

This framework must encourage a process which anticipates change and reflects emerging social, economic, and environmental realities, while respecting and supporting shared values. Once agreement is reached on a common future, the people and governments in the GTA, acting cooperatively, can build upon its solid asset base to ensure that the Area remains viable, sustainable, and prosperous.

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5 In addition to the reports listed under 1, also note:

Clayton Research Associates Limited, *Review of Population Projections for the GTA – One Year Later*, (prepared for the Office of the Greater Toronto Area, December, 1990).

Clayton Research Associates Limited, *Migration Trends in the Greater Toronto Area*, (prepared for the Office of the Greater Toronto Area, December, 1991).

In spite of the recent decline in economic activity in the GTA resulting from the recession (which has resulted in fewer migrants than predicted in the original Clayton Research Associates Report) the long term projections regarding population still appear realistic for planning purposes.

6 IBI Group in association with Stephan McLaughlin Consultants Inc., *Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study Background Report No. 2 Minimal Growth Option*, (prepared for the Greater Toronto Coordinating Committee, June, 1990) pp.7-9.

7 *Ibid.*,p.15.

8 Paul Niebanck "Growth Controls and the Production of Inequality," *Understanding Growth Management – Critical Issues and a Research Agenda*, eds. David Brower, David Godschalk and Douglas Porter (Washington, D.C., 1989), p.117.

9 Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront (Canada), *Watershed: Interim Report* (Ottawa, August, 1990).

FIGURE 3

"REVIEWING BASIC GOALS"

"... the following goal-related questions are offered as the basis for a full-scale re-evaluation of growth management:

1. Is growth management contributing to the health of our natural systems? Are local resources being wisely used, and is resource-use, in general, being restrained? Is there a bioregional consciousness, a commitment to regeneration, at work in local planning and management?

2. Is growth management providing a balanced set of housing and occupation opportunities? Is there an appreciation for the value of inclusiveness and diversity? Has an affirmative obligation been accepted by the locality?

3. Does growth management encourage citizens to confront directly the requirements of everyday living; efficient transportation, adequate schools, and public facilities? Can the growth management community be proud that it has worked to improve the quality of the built environment?

4. Is growth management leading towards a vital and unique identity for a locality, rather than a stereotype of blandness and sameness. In this regard, is attention being given to public art and symbolism, to an expressive community form, and to an appreciation for the landscape, the history and the human ecology of the area?

5. Is growth management opening channels for meaningful participation in public life, rather than privatizing and disguising more and more issues of importance? Do people feel a part of things, and are they satisfied that outcomes address their deepest yearnings? Can basic needs for self- discovery and creative expression be met locally?

6. Are the growth management community's functions functioning? Is the private sector vigorous and competitive? Are the structures of planning and management accessible, open, and flexible? Is there movement towards a mature network of ideas and opportunities?

These goals are not abstractions, any more than 'environmental impact' or 'carrying capacity' or 'quality of life' are abstractions. Elusive they are, but so is every vision of any worth. For a sophisticated society such as ours, they are appropriate goals against which to measure the accomplishments of growth management - 'the coming of age of planning.' We need to know whether growth management is responding to basic matters of worth, and whether it is having good effects."

Understanding Growth Management - Critical Issues and a Research Agenda, The Urban Land Institute, pp. 117-118

FIGURE 4

AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO PLANNING FROM "WATERSHED"

"Traditionally, human activities have been managed on a piece-meal basis, treating the economy separately from social issues or the environment. But the ecosystem concept holds that these are interrelated, that decisions made in one area affect all the others. To deal effectively with the environmental problems in any 'ecosystem' requires a holistic or ecosystem approach to managing human activities.

An ecosystem approach:

- includes the whole system, not just parts of it;
- focuses on interrelationships among the elements;
- understands that humans are part of nature, not separate from it;
- recognizes the dynamic nature of the ecosystem - a moving picture rather than a still photograph;
- incorporates the concepts of carrying capacity, resilience, and sustainability - suggesting that there are limits to human activity;
- uses a broad definition of the environment - natural, physical, economic, social and cultural;
- encompasses both urban and rural activities;
- is based on natural geographic units - such as watersheds - rather than on political boundaries;
- embraces all levels of activity - local, regional, national and international;
- emphasizes the importance of living species other than humans and of generations other than our own;
- is based on an ethic in which progress is measured by the quality, well-being, integrity, and dignity it accords natural, social, and economic systems."

Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront, *Watershed*, pp.19-20

CHAPTER 4

A VISION FOR THE GTA IN 2021

Experience has shown that predictions about the future cannot be made with any great accuracy; but the future can be shaped through decisions made now. We expect the communities of the GTA to evolve in ways which are quite different from recent trends. Let's suppose that we have the power to look into the future. ***What would we hope to see in the year 2021, if we meet the challenges of the GTA in accordance with our values and primary goal?***

4.1 DIVERSE, SUPPORTIVE, AND PARTICIPATIVE COMMUNITIES

In 2021, the GTA will be made up of diverse, supportive, and participative communities. These communities are composed of lively and compact neighbourhoods. Each community is distinctive and each is an example of harmony and vitality among people of diverse origins, traditions and ages. The essential resources for healthy living and civilized relations are broadly available.

The high quality of life in GTA communities derives from mutual support among residents, a rich array of public amenities, a stable living standard, and a clean and safe physical environment. Cultural stimulation is easily accessible: within the immediate neighbourhood; through transit to specialized cultural and social amenities dispersed throughout the GTA; and, through communication systems to communities of affinity anywhere in the world.

Increased public participation in the local planning process has produced public services, community facilities, infrastructure, and services that are more suited to local needs and better integrated with regional and inter-regional systems. Social support, community health, and other services are available either close to where people live or easily accessible by transit.

Transit has replaced the car as the preferred mode of travel in the urbanized areas, not only because it is more environmentally sound but also because it is safe, reliable, accessible, and less costly.

Decentralization of employment throughout the GTA has been encouraged by public policies and the balance between jobs and housing has improved. Most residents can now choose to live and work in the same community, if they wish.

The main streets of all communities provide housing in a compact form for a cross-section of ages, income groups, and cultures. The streets are alive with people. Diversity is celebrated and main street shops and stores prosper. Residents have a sense of safety, well-being, and belonging in the community as a result of frequent encounters and interactions with others throughout the day.

A wide variety of open spaces, from roof top gardens, interior courtyards, streetside cafés, and parks of all sizes, have been provided. The streets are lined with trees and shrubs and there are benches which encourage people to stop and rest. This allows people to enjoy the stimulus and social contact of urban areas or to escape to peaceful, tranquil surroundings.

4.2 STEWARDSHIP OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

In 2021, we have taken responsibility for the stewardship of our environment. Substantial progress toward a conserver society has been achieved, leading to significant reductions in per capita consumption of natural resources, such as energy, water, and land. The GTA no longer leads the world in the consumption of these resources. There have been significant reductions in pollution and waste generation. Industries have progressed towards zero discharge of toxic substances and have developed pollution prevention strategies to address the remaining emissions to air, land, and water.

Natural core areas such as wetlands, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs), and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs), are now linked through clearly defined and protected Natural Heritage Systems. These areas have been connected by corridors such as river valleys and connecting links such as woodlands. The Natural Heritage Systems have enhanced biodiversity, ensured the unimpeded movement of plant and animal species and protected essential ecological processes and functions.

Natural filtration of storm runoff is generally provided, as well as stormwater detention ponds to cleanse and moderate flows. There has been substantial progress with the Metropolitan Toronto RAP (Remedial Action Plan) in cleaning up rivers, creeks, and the waterfront and in improving water quality. The Lake Ontario shoreline is free from serious river borne pollutants and its beaches are open all summer. Progress has been made in cleaning up contaminated soils and groundwater.

Air quality in the GTA has improved for many reasons. Industrial emissions have been reduced. Transit has become the preferred mode of travel in the urbanized areas. While the number of automobiles in the GTA has increased since 1992, they are used less frequently than had been projected in the 1980s. This along with tightened vehicular emission standards has meant that emissions from automobiles, which were the largest source of locally produced air pollution, have been cut drastically. In addition, the promotion of alternatives to the automobile such as transit, cycling, and walking have had a major impact on air quality and energy conservation.

All new development is assessed for its potential to contribute to the rehabilitation of degraded areas, to restore damaged habitats, and to protect the environment. Site clearing, when it occurs, no longer takes place before this assessment has been made.

Urban design, lot layouts, and densities are now used to achieve environmental objectives such as reducing energy use and conserving water, avoiding major alterations to natural drainage systems, maximizing retention of natural vegetation, maintaining buffer zones along watercourses, continuous parkland dedication, and reserving from development all areas of environmental significance.

Buildings are well constructed and are designed to reduce pollution and promote energy efficiency in heating and cooling. They demonstrate a sensitivity to solar access, topography, and landscaping. In addition, new technology and procedures for the efficient use of energy have reduced the average household's consumption of energy, and decreased the pressure to develop non-renewable resources. Energy-related environmental problems such as smog and acid-rain are improving, making urban life more enjoyable and reducing impacts on the environment.

Development proceeds with minimal negative impact on significant cultural heritage resources. Sites highlighting Ontario's cultural diversity and proud community heritage have been developed for public education/recreation programs and for local economic development through tourism. Neighbourhood revitalization and a strengthened community identity are promoted through architectural conservation. Representative sites and landscapes are protected through voluntary stewardship programs and have been incorporated into greenlands and trail systems.

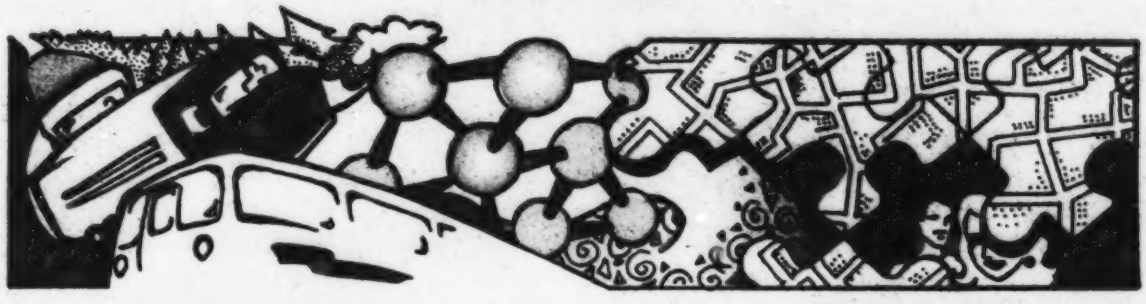
4.3 INTEGRATED GTA - WIDE STRATEGY

In 2021, there is an integrated strategy for the GTA. This strategy, using an ecosystem approach was developed and agreed to by local and regional municipalities, and provincial and federal governments. It has been in place since 1994 and has been updated with public input since then. This strategy resulted from wide participation by interest groups and the public. The shared vision for the GTA provides the basis for a commitment by regional and local municipal governments to the strategic action plan and to specific, desirable patterns of development such as urban nodes and protected rural areas.

This strategy permits inter-regional integration and the development of a variety of GTA-wide systems created through public and private sector efforts, including greenlands and trails, watercourses, and various types of infrastructure and services.

There is also a coordinated economic strategy which has resulted in less competition among the economic centres of the GTA and more effective alliances among GTA businesses. This has enhanced the ability of the GTA to compete in global markets.

4.4 URBAN NODES



In 2021, urban nodes are well established. These nodes are largely self-supporting in employment, housing, and social, educational, and health services. They have sufficient densities to support high-quality public transit within and between nodes. Each node has a downtown core which provides retail and community facilities, services, jobs, recreational opportunities, open space, and housing. Much of this housing is affordable. New downtown cores have formed at "gateways" where transit lines (for instance GO, subways) meet.

Examples of nodes include: historical centres such as Oshawa, Oakville, and Toronto; long established centres such as North York, Scarborough, Mississauga, and Etobicoke; and, recently established centres in the extreme south of the Region of York along the Highway 7 transportation corridor.

Six million people live and work in the GTA. The communities of the GTA have accommodated two million more people and provided one million more jobs. By concentrating most of the growth in these urban nodes, expansion of urban boundaries has been limited, and disruption to existing neighbourhoods minimized.

Most new houses and jobs have been created by redevelopment, revitalization, or reuse. Redevelopment of vacant or under-used urban lands including former industrial areas has resulted in high density communities. While some high-rise facilities have been built, most of the increased density has been achieved in low and medium rise communities with a mix of single and multiple housing types, clean industries, office, commercial facilities, industry, and public facilities. Despite these changes, more people now work in these redeveloped areas than during the 1990s. Main streets have been revitalized and now have an average of three storeys of residential space over one or two storeys of commercial space. Existing buildings have been reused to accommodate residential and employment purposes.

A number of smaller hamlets and towns throughout the GTA have not grown significantly from their 1992 borders, but are nonetheless, thriving communities. Some infill and intensification within certain hamlet and town limits has occurred. Concentrating development in the existing urban areas has significantly reduced encroachment and development pressure on open spaces in the GTA. Rural landscapes throughout the GTA have been preserved and protected. Restricted growth is most noticeable in the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine areas. Food production capacity for future generations has been protected by maintaining lands capable of supporting agriculture.

4.5 A PROSPEROUS SOCIETY

In 2021, effective investment in GTA-wide systems and a more efficient urban form has lowered the cost of doing business in the GTA and increased productivity. There is also a broader commitment of the public and private sectors to improved education, training, retraining, and research and development.

A stronger economy has provided a broader range of employment opportunities for the people of the GTA. A wider mix of housing and the availability of affordable and assisted housing, better designed urban environments, and an improved balance of housing and employment opportunities have improved living conditions for the people who live, work, and raise families in the GTA.

Because of strong connections to international markets, an effective urban organization, a highly trained and motivated workforce, and a diverse, but stable society, the GTA is secure as one of the foremost economic regions in North America.

CHAPTER 5

AN AGENDA FOR CONSENSUS AND ACTION

In order to realize this vision of the GTA in 2021 and to achieve the goal of ***creating and fostering a quality of individual and community life which is just and sustainable - socially, economically, and environmentally,*** *current practices will have to be significantly changed. The Provincial government has been encouraged to provide the leadership which will be necessary to implement these changes.*

The task ahead should not be underestimated. While many agree that urban sprawl must be stopped, policies exist which permit or encourage construction on the fringes of our urban areas. While transit is a more environmentally responsible mode of transportation, there is acceptance of continued, and even increased, use of cars. To make real gains, a process of change must be initiated which will increase understanding of these issues, seek consensus on specific actions, and build commitment on the part of governments and people in all communities.

The proposed process of change includes the following:

- building co-operation between the Province and the municipalities;
- establishing working groups to identify actions in specific areas of concern;
- stimulating widespread public discussion of the values and the vision as outlined in this document;
- preparing a strategic action plan to guide future decision making.

While the vision is being debated and the strategic action plan is being developed, the concepts in this paper will guide all provincial ministries in their activities in the GTA.

The Province believes that the only way we can be successful in achieving our goal is to adopt an ecosystem approach to planning and to concentrate growth in urban nodes. These nodes will primarily be city centres such as Toronto, Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, Mississauga, Oshawa, Oakville, and emerging centres in the extreme south of the Region of York along the Highway 7 transportation corridor.

5.1 PROVINCIAL/MUNICIPAL COOPERATION

The Heads of Council Committee which includes the Chairmen of the 5 Regions and the 30 mayors of the area municipalities, will play a central role in assisting the Province in refining the vision and developing the strategy.

Discussions with the municipalities will help determine the most effective consultation process in light of the need to coordinate with those municipalities who are already undertaking official plan reviews. In addition, early in 1992, the Sewell Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario will begin a series of public meetings about their draft goals. While the final Sewell report is not due to be published until June 1993, this does not preclude continuing discussions on the actions which will be required in the GTA. This is particularly the case as many of the draft goals established by the Sewell Commission are clearly supportive of the vision outlined in this document.

A means must be found so that the need for consultations on official plans, the planning process, and the future of the GTA is clearly understood. By working together with municipalities this can be done and the valuable input being received by all processes can be shared.

5.2 PROVINCIAL/MUNICIPAL WORKING GROUPS

Six Working Groups primarily composed of provincial and municipal staff have been established to consolidate work that has already been done independently in various ministries, agencies and municipalities, to give advice on the attainability of our vision, and to outline the next steps that must be taken in certain areas.

In some cases, working groups will be able to propose immediate steps to be taken. In other cases, they will provide a framework for future actions, show how decisions can be reached, and specify further needs for information and consultation.

The work of these groups will be published and circulated to provide the background for the informed public debate that will occur in the Spring of 1992. This debate must occur before a final strategic action plan can be drafted.

Each group, as a starting point, will summarize and consolidate background work which has been undertaken in their particular areas of investigation by Ministries, agencies, and municipalities. This will ensure that issues and opportunities are clearly identified. The groups will also each ensure that the terminology they are using is commonly understood. For example, "nodal" and "compact urban form" will be defined by the Urban Form working group.

A summary of the activities to be undertaken by these groups is provided below.

1. Urban Form

The vision outlined in this document requires that urban sprawl be stopped. This has been agreed to, in principle, by the five regions of the GTA. The province believes that a more compact nodal development pattern must be adopted.

Peoples' attitudes towards their living environments must also be understood so that the current quality of life will be maintained in a more compact urban form. It is necessary to respond to misunderstandings, fears, and genuine concerns about compact urban form.

This working group will identify various issues related to compact urban form including:

- regulatory difficulties;
- concerns of the building and development industry;
- non-residential aspects and implications.

The group will prepare case studies to illustrate the viability of compact urban forms of development and show how communities can better reflect the values of social equity, economic enhancement, and a healthy environment (e.g. greater diversity, improved urban design and better public transit potential). From the case studies, the group will develop criteria consistent with the values that enable the achievement of an attractive and acceptable urban form that is environmentally,

economically, and socially sustainable and that is applicable to the varying conditions within the GTA.

In liaison with other working groups, a preliminary identification of a complete system of urban nodes, consistent with the values and the criteria emerging from the case studies will be made.

ii. Countryside

Greenlands must be protected, maintained, and enhanced in order to protect the environment, quality of life, and economic health of the GTA. The Countryside Working Group, in conjunction with the Urban Form, Infrastructure, and Human Services Groups, will examine growth potential in the GTA in the context of good planning.

This group will:

- define and identify greenlands and cultural areas which require protection and formulate a strategy to protect, maintain, enhance, and where appropriate, link them;
- define and identify the range of uses which occur in the countryside (e.g. agriculture, recreation, aggregate extractions) and establish principles which will enhance the viability and compatibility of rural areas with urban areas;
- identify issues at the rural/urban interface and suggest appropriate mechanisms to address them;
- develop mechanisms for evaluating the health of the natural environment;
- formulate a strategy for defining and establishing a trail system.

iii. Human Services

In order to promote the development of healthy communities that enhance the quality of life for all people in the GTA, it is imperative that a variety of human services be available and accessible to this growing, diverse, and geographically dispersed population.

This group, which has members from various service sectors, will address ways in which accessibility, affordability, and availability of human services can contribute to social equity, enhanced employment and economic vitality, and the achievement and maintenance of a healthy environment.

Human Services include, but are not restricted to, health and social supports, recreation, learning, education, security, and protection.

The group will:

- identify the elements of healthy communities and suggest means by which healthy communities can be achieved;
- develop case studies that highlight ways to integrate human and social development planning into economic, land use, and environmental planning;
- seek ways to work with communities by suggesting processes that are inclusive and improve citizen participation and flow of information.

iv. Economic Vitality

The economy of the GTA is central to Ontario's economy and a crucial contributor to the Canadian economy. There is a serious challenge which must be faced as the result of changing economic times. The GTA has not been cushioned from the economic hardships that have faced the province and the country.

This group will consider how to:

- develop an area-wide strategy for sustainable prosperity in urban and rural areas that will encourage the retention and enhancement of existing and the creation of new, value-added jobs;
- forge new partnerships with all interested groups, including labour and business;
- coordinate government policy so that it is harmonized with other parts of Ontario.

This group will also identify the GTA's strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of the GTA will be publicized and negative impressions about our economy will be corrected.

v. Infrastructure

Improved and expanded infrastructure systems are needed to support the Province's vision for the GTA.

This group will prepare an inventory of existing and planned infrastructure. Based on the preliminary set of nodes prepared by the Urban Form Working Group, and on the inventory of environmental features prepared by the Countryside Working Group, advice will be provided on the best way to use existing and planned infrastructure and on the need for additional investment over the next 30 years.

This group is also charged with identifying how to:

- prioritize the delivery of infrastructure to help achieve the vision;
- identify and protect future corridors and land sites.

vi. Investment Planning and Mechanisms

All governments are facing unprecedented fiscal pressures. Preliminary estimates for various growth patterns for the GTA, prepared as part of the *Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study*, indicated that the level of required funding will be substantially in excess of current annual expenditures for all levels of government. Systems must be established to ensure integrated planning of the capital investments made over the next 30 years to support the vision. The working group set up to consider this issue will:

- recommend options for a system that integrates capital planning and sets priorities for future public capital investments in the GTA which work towards the achievement of the Vision.
- explore, assess, and recommend new mechanisms for financing public capital investment, ensuring that any mechanisms take into account the GTA's competitive position.

5.3 INFORMED PUBLIC DEBATE

A healthy and equitable society is one which encourages participation in the decision-making processes of the community. Success will depend on broad public understanding of, and commitment to, the vision and the strategy.

Consultation with and input from the public will be part of a continuing process. The first step will be widespread circulation of "GTA 2021: Meeting the Challenges: An Overview" which summarizes the values and vision from this document. Residents, community associations, interest groups, including business and labour representatives, politicians, and academic and professional institutions will be asked to suggest how this vision can be given life in the community based on their understanding of local problems and needs. Young people must also be involved as their future depends on the outcome of this process.

In addition to the circulation of the Overview document, there will be ongoing contact with the public. Newspaper articles and inserts, discussions, seminars, and community meetings will all be used in an attempt to reach and exchange ideas with, as many people as possible. As stated earlier, the vision will be tested with those whose lives and livelihoods will be affected by it. As also stated earlier, the conclusions reached by the Working Groups will be published to provide information to be used during the public debate. It is essential that these discussions and debate occur before a final strategic action plan, which incorporates individual opinions and actions, can be drafted.

The format and details of this process will be established and publicized after discussions with the municipalities.

In late 1992, after this debate, when there is a shared understanding of the vision, the Province and the municipalities will begin to prepare a Strategic Action Plan - for implementation in 1994.

5.4 A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

A strategic action plan for the GTA is necessary to co-ordinate activities across all municipalities and provincial ministries. It will ensure that once a shared vision is agreed to, all actions taken by municipal governments or the Provincial are mindful of this vision. The strategic action plan will provide long term stability and yet be sensitive to changing needs. It will be used as a framework to guide capital investment – ensuring that scarce resources are spent on the infrastructure needed to implement the plan. The strategic action plan will also be used as the basis for steps that can be taken by individuals, communities, municipalities, and the Province.

The details of the strategic action plan and the roles of each level of government in implementing the plan will be developed cooperatively and over time. The plan will be developed using the ecosystem approach: to incorporate a value-driven approach to planning, to consider cumulative effects, and to create a healthy ecosystem.

A framework for ecosystem based planning has already been provided by the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront as noted in Chapter 3. We can use this framework as a starting point and adapt it as we develop our GTA-wide strategic action plan.

The ecosystem approach will require regular, proactive consultation and cooperation between all agencies. The strategic action plan must include procedures which will integrate actions across functions, across municipalities, and across levels of government. These procedures will ensure a broader focus for planning in Metro and in the regions of the GTA and allow for consideration of the various relationships among them. And, a new capacity to perform GTA-wide planning for those systems which are best provided co-operatively by Provincial and regional governments is necessary. For this integrated approach to planning to be successful, the Province will need to rationalize and prioritize its own policy interests.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Government of Ontario is encouraged by the interest in these issues and the emerging consensus about what must be done. We are confident that a cooperative approach will build commitment to our values and clarify a common vision and plan for the future. With decisive leadership, we can ensure that the future GTA is a great urban centre which respects the natural environment, contributes to a strong Provincial economy, and provides an unparalleled quality of life for its residents.